

CHAPTER 5 AESTHETICS

The physical attractiveness of a development project contributes significantly to the quality of a community. Changes in the aesthetics or visual character of an area can have a social and psychological impact on residents as well as passersby. Onsite and surrounding viewsheds, as conveyed through the spatial relationships between structures, nearby open spaces, and the adjacent land uses, can enhance or diminish the quality of life for community members. These considerations, along with the use of colors, textures, patterns, and landscaping, collectively create an aesthetic element.

The purpose of this visual resources analysis is to describe the landscape within and surrounding the DeWitt Center Study Area, determine characteristics of the project area that are aesthetically valuable to the viewing public, and assess the sensitivity of the landscape to visual changes which may result from implementation of the proposed project.

5.1 SETTING

DeWitt Center is a primarily urban land use located in a transition zone between urban development along SR 49 and rural residential development along the western boundary of the project area. The western portion of DeWitt Center is undeveloped and provides a rural atmosphere. The surrounding area development factors contribute to the development projected to occur within DeWitt Center, as expressed in the *Placer County General Plan*, *Auburn/Bowman Community Plan*, and *North Auburn Community Development Strategy and Design Guidelines*.

DeWitt Center carries both Mixed Use and Open Space land use designations. Zoning designations include Open Space (O), Office Professional (OP), Commercial Planned Development (CPD), and Heavy Commercial (C3). The areas zoned OP, CPD, and C3 also carry the Design Scenic Corridor (Dc) designation, which “provide[s] special regulations to protect and enhance the aesthetic character of lands and buildings within the public view; to protect historic buildings; [and] to minimize any adverse impacts of conflicting land uses...” (Placer County 2002). Specifically, the Dc designation throughout DeWitt Center requires that no construction or demolition may occur in the project area without Design Review approval.

In recognition of the need to protect the North Auburn area’s historic and natural resources during rapid growth along the SR 49 corridor, as well as the opportunities for commercial redevelopment in this area, Placer County Planning Department and Placer County Redevelopment Agency prepared the *North Auburn Community Development Strategy and Design Guidelines* to establish “long range goals and guidelines” for continuing development in North Auburn. Preparation of the Development Strategy included community participation in workshops and at meetings of local business and community groups. The goals and guidelines adopted in this strategy were driven by the findings developed upon reviewing community feedback and discussions. During this process, the Finance Administration Building, constructed at DeWitt Center in 2000, was one of the three “most commonly cited examples of good design” (Placer County 2001). *Figure 5-1* displays photographs of this building and the existing structures along B Avenue.

Figure 5-1

The *North Auburn Community Development Strategy and Design Guidelines* locates DeWitt Center and adjacent land to the north and east within the “Core” design area, which also incorporates the area between Bell Road and Luther Road. The development vision for the core area includes a village concept, with “very formal high-density mixed-use projects” that provide sidewalks, landscaping, and other “town-center” type amenities (Placer County 2001).

Exterior Viewshed

DeWitt Center is accessed from Bell Road on the north and Atwood Road on the south. First Street traverses the eastern project boundary, and no roads traverse the western boundary. Portions of the site can be viewed from all three roads, as well as from adjacent lands. At its closest point to SR 49, the study area is approximately 1,500 feet west of the state highway. The majority of the study area and the existing onsite development are not visible from that highway.

The tree and lawn areas between Bell Road and A Avenue dominate views of DeWitt Center from the north. The northern portion of DeWitt Center can also be viewed from the rural residential land uses adjacent to the western boundary of the site, near the intersection of Richardson Drive and Bell Road. A small lawn area between these residences and Richardson Drive provides a visual buffer from the existing buildings adjacent to Richardson Drive. *Figure 5-2* provides photographs of the view of DeWitt Center from Bell Road.

Rural residential land uses are currently being developed north of the western portion of DeWitt Center. No roadways traverse this part of the project area. Natural riparian vegetation at the northern boundary of DeWitt Center serves as a visual buffer between these developing residential uses and the existing decommissioned wastewater treatment plant. West of the open water pond, the onsite landscape consists of grassland and scattered trees in the north, which transition to oak woodland in the southern portion of this area. This portion of DeWitt Center can be seen from the existing rural residences at the northwestern corner of the project area, and from the vacant rural residential property west of the area.

The dense oak woodland in the west and the developed portions of DeWitt Center in the east characterize the southern project boundary. Between the Main Jail and the eastern project boundary, existing development is within 100 feet of Atwood Road. Lawn areas are maintained in the setback areas between the existing development and the roadway. Medium density residential development and office-professional land uses exist south of the project area. West of the jail, Atwood Road is lined on both sides by oak trees, providing a physical transition from urban to rural development. Rural residential land uses exist south and west of the project site in this area. Views of DeWitt Center from Atwood Road primarily consist of oak woodland vegetation in the west, the Main Jail near Richardson Drive, and landscape areas and storage warehouse type buildings in the east. *Figure 5-2* provides photographs of the Main Jail viewed from Atwood Road.

East of the project area, land uses are primarily urban, including medium density residential, commercial, and office land uses. Vacant land exists between the eastern project boundary and SR 49. A Home Depot store has been proposed for this site. That project is the subject of an EIR being prepared on behalf of the Placer County Planning Department. DeWitt Center is not visible from SR 49, but is visible from the western portions of intervening parcels.

Figure 5-2

Interior Viewshed

DeWitt Center's aesthetic character is shaped by a mixture of developed and undeveloped land, government and commercial land uses, buildings originally constructed in the early 1940s, and limited new development (e.g., Main Jail, Finance Administration Building, Juvenile Hall).

The older buildings were constructed as a military medical hospital, known as DeWitt General Hospital. They are one-story brick structures 30 feet wide by 300 feet long, arranged in parallel rows of between five and eight buildings. Frequently, these buildings are referred to as "barracks-style" due to their similarity to institutional housing units. Courtyard spaces 40-feet wide separate each building. These structures have largely kept their historic integrity despite land use changes and the surrounding new development. Notwithstanding the changes and limited improvements to the original buildings, the general atmosphere and period architecture have remained intact, qualifying a portion of DeWitt Center as potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historical Resources as a historic district. Buildings within DeWitt Center are not considered potentially eligible for listing individually.

Since the time of construction of DeWitt General Hospital, several new structures have been added to the site. Warehouse-type buildings, including the vehicle maintenance garage and storage facilities, exist in the southern portion of the site, east of Richardson Drive. The Main Jail, Finance Administration Building, and Juvenile Hall have been constructed in the central portion of the DeWitt Center Study Area.

From east to west, the property transitions from an urban landscape of professional offices and government facilities, to a more rural landscape, with oak woodland, wetland, and pasture habitats on undeveloped land.

Light and Glare

The two factors that determine the amount of light that an object receives are the luminous intensity (brightness) of a light source and the distance between the light source and the receptor area. An increase in luminous intensity (measured in footcandles) increases the illumination of an area. However, as the distance from the light source increases, illumination decreases. The most prominent light sources at DeWitt Center are lighting at the jail and juvenile detention facility. No changes to these light sources are included in the proposed DeWitt Government Center Facility Plan. Streetlights along Richardson Drive and other project roadways also create limited night light within the study area.

5.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Auburn/Bowman Community Plan

The project area is located within the jurisdiction of the *Auburn/Bowman Community Plan*, which encourages the preservation of those unique features and characteristics that define the Auburn/Bowman community. The following goals and policies, which can be found in the Community Design Element of the *Auburn/Bowman Community Plan*, are applicable to the proposed development covered in the DeWitt Government Center Facility Plan.

- Goal III.C.2.a:** Encourage new development in the Auburn/Bowman area to contribute to the creation of a mixed-use, compact, readily identifiable foothill town while maintaining the existing rural character of the area outside urban boundaries.
- Goal III.C.2.d:** Encourage the development of Industrial, Commercial, and Residential projects, which complement the rural nature of the area.
- Goal III.C.2.e:** Encourage compatibility with neighboring land uses.
- Goal III.C.2.j:** Preserve the natural land forms, natural vegetation, and natural resources of the area as much as possible. It is recognized that development of commercial, industrial, and higher density residential uses can result in the loss of naturally occurring amenities. Where this is allowed to occur, adherence to a set of community design guidelines should assist in mitigating such impacts.
- III.C.3.a.1 Where appropriate, natural features should be retained as buffers between different, potentially incompatible uses as well as serving to preserve the rural character of the area. Maintain the heavily vegetated corridors that exist along circulation routes to preserve their rural nature and their perceived value as natural buffers. Where natural features are not available, landscaped buffer yards should be provided to minimize the adverse effects of higher intensity uses.
- III.C.3.a.2 Property should be developed with a minimum disturbance to the natural terrain. Natural drainage channels and swales should be preserved in-lieu of creating artificial drainage systems and creative and innovative building techniques to construct buildings suited to natural hillside surroundings shall be encouraged.
- III.C.3.a.3 Landscaping should be used to reduce the visual impact of all structures, including solid fences. Natural vegetation should dominate where possible. Where existing vegetation is inadequate, the use of native plant materials is encouraged. Landscaping materials should provide an informal character and smooth transition between buildings, parking lots adjoining roadways and open areas.
- III.C.3.a.5 Commercial and residential site layouts should be designed with the intent to encourage human interactions, and to be compatible with the surrounding environment, versus designs which solely accommodate automobile usage; pedestrian walkways should be provided between commercial and residential areas.
- III.C.3.a.6 Sites shall be designed and developed to provide safe, convenient, pleasant access for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists as well as equestrians in some areas.
- III.C.3.a.7 Roads should follow natural topography wherever possible to minimize cutting and grading.
- III.C.3.a.8 Where possible, preserve native trees and support the use of native and/or drought tolerant plant materials in all revegetation/landscaping projects.

- III.C.3.a.9 Structures of historic or architectural significance shall be identified and documented, and efforts shall be made to preserve them and use them as a focal point of community design.
- III.C.3.a.10 Protect the scenic corridors of I-80, Highway 49, Bell Road, Dry Creek Road, Mt. Vernon Road, and Christian Valley Road to preserve existing vistas of the American River Canyon, the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range and other local views, which are important to maintaining the community's identity from inappropriate development. These scenic corridors are special areas of concern for protecting hillside and ridgelines. Although it is acknowledged that commercial, industrial, and multi-family projects may have intensive development impacts, projects in these scenic corridors should be designed to minimize disturbance to significant hillsides and ridgeline areas. Each project site will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis during the development review process to determine if special design elements need to be incorporated into the project.
- III.C.3.a.11 Encourage and utilize existing programs for protection and enhancement of scenic corridors, including but not limited to, design review, sign control, scenic setbacks, density limitations, planned unit developments, grading and tree removal standards, open space easements, and land conservation contracts.
- III.C.3.a.12 New utility lines should be installed underground to ensure minimum disruption to the environment and as little disturbance as possible to vegetation, particularly in scenic corridors. Existing utility should be undergrounded as funding becomes available based on the existing Department of Public Works' program for such projects.
- III.C.3.a.13 The use of aesthetic design considerations shall be encouraged for road construction, reconstruction, or maintenance of all designated scenic highways.
- Goal IV.C.1.b:** Protect the natural beauty and minimize disturbance of natural terrain and vegetation.
- Goal IV.C.1.c:** Protect open areas and greenbelts throughout the planning area for use and enjoyment by residents and visitors.
- Goal IV.C.1.f:** Provide open space to shape and guide development and to enhance community identity.
- Goal IV.C.1.g:** Conserve visual resources of the community, including important vistas and wooded areas.
- IV.C.2.c Preserve and enhance natural land forms, native vegetation, and natural resources as open space to the maximum extent feasible.
- IV.C.2.f In the design and construction of new development, preserve the following types of areas and features as open space to the maximum extent feasible: high erosion hazard areas; areas subject to landslide or with severe slope stability problems; areas with high fire risk; scenic and trail corridors; streams and other areas subject to flooding from a 100-year storm; streamside vegetation;

- wetlands; significant stands of vegetation; wildlife corridors, and; any areas of special ecological significance.
- IV.C.2.j Protect the scenic corridor of I-80, Highway 49, Bell Road, Mt. Vernon Road, Dry Creek Road, and Christian Valley Road to preserve existing scenic vistas of the American River Canyon, the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range, and other local views.
- IV.C.2.k Encourage and utilize existing County programs for protection and enhancement of scenic corridors and routes, including but not limited to: design review, sign control, landscaping and mounding, undergrounding utilities, scenic setbacks, density limitations, planned unit developments, grading and tree removal standards, open space easements, land conservation contracts, and anti-litter, beautification and cleanup programs.
- IV.C.2.n Conserve visual resources of the community, including important vistas, wooded areas, and in particular riparian habitats and natural drainage channels, which are important in providing high quality water resources and low cost natural flood control, and are important open space areas.

Placer County General Plan

The Land Use Element of the *Placer County General Plan* contains the following policies regarding aesthetics and visual resources that are applicable to the proposed DeWitt Government Center Facility Plan.

- Goal 1.K** To protect the visual and scenic resources of Placer County as important quality-of-life amenities for county residents and a principal asset in the promotion of recreation and tourism.
- 1.K.3 The County shall require that new development in rural areas incorporate landscaping that provides a transition between the vegetation in developed areas and adjacent open space or undeveloped areas.
- 1.K.4 The County shall require that new development incorporates sound soil conservation practices and minimizes land alterations. Land alterations should comply with the following guidelines:
- a. Limit cuts and fills;
 - b. Limit grading to the smallest practical area of land;
 - c. Limit land exposure to the shortest practical amount of time;
 - d. Replant graded areas to ensure establishment of plant cover before the next rainy season; and
 - e. Create grading contours that blend with the natural contours onsite or with contours on property immediately adjacent to the area of development.
- 1.K.5 The County shall require that new roads, parking, and utilities be designed to minimize visual impacts. Unless limited by geological or engineering constraints, utilities should be installed underground and roadways and parking areas should be designed to fit the natural terrain.

- Goal 1.L** To develop a system of scenic routes serving the needs of residents and visitors to Placer County and to preserve, enhance, and protect the scenic resources visible from these scenic routes.
- 1.L.3 The County shall protect and enhance scenic corridors through such means as design review, sign control, undergrounding utilities, scenic setbacks, density limitations, planned unit developments, grading and tree removal standards, open space easements, and land conservation contracts.
- 1.L.4 The County shall provide for landscaping and/or landscaped mounding along designated scenic corridors where desirable to maintain and improve scenic qualities and screen unsightly views.
- Goal 1.O** To promote and enhance the quality and aesthetics of development in Placer County.
- 1.O.1 The County shall require all new development to be designed in compliance with applicable provisions of the *Placer County Design Guidelines Manual*.
- 1.O.3 The County shall require that all new development be designed to be compatible with the scale and character of the area. Structures, especially those outside of village, urban, and commercial centers, should be designed and located so that:
- a. They do not silhouette against the sky above ridgelines or hilltops;
 - b. Roof lines and vertical architectural features blend with and do not detract from the natural background or ridge outline;
 - c. They fit the natural terrain; and
 - d. They utilize building materials, colors, and textures that blend with the natural landscape (e.g., avoid high contrasts).
- 1.O.6 Historically or architecturally significant buildings should be preserved and not be substantially changed in exterior appearance in ways that diminish their historical character, unless doing so is necessary to avoid or mitigate hazards, and other means of mitigation are infeasible. Such structures should be preserved and used as focal points of community design.
- 1.O.7 The County shall require that mixed-use areas include community focal points to serve as gathering and/or destination points. Examples of focal points include civic centers, parks, fountains, monuments, and street vistas. On-site natural features, such as wetlands and streams, can also function as focal points.
- 1.O.9 The County shall discourage the use of outdoor lighting that shines unnecessarily onto adjacent properties or into the night sky.

5.3 IMPACTS

Significance Criteria

Several factors can be used to determine a project's aesthetic effects, including existing and proposed views, visual character of the surrounding areas, screening or visual buffers, and the

community's aesthetic values. Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines provides that a project may be considered to have a significant environmental effect if it will:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings;
- Substantially degrade existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings; or
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare adversely affecting day or nighttime views in the area.

Project Impacts

Impacts Determined to be Less than Significant

Effect on A Scenic Vista. DeWitt Center is not an element in any local scenic vistas, therefore the proposed project would not impact any scenic vistas. The project area is relatively flat, limiting visibility of DeWitt Center from nearby lands. Existing development surrounding DeWitt Center precludes the immediate project area from being designated as a scenic vista. *Figure 2-1 of CHAPTER 2, PROJECT DESCRIPTION* provides the USGS topographic information for the project area. *Figure 5-2* provides photographs of DeWitt Center viewed from Atwood Road and Bell Road.

Light and Glare. Implementation of the proposed project would result in minor increases in light levels in the interior of the project area. Nighttime lighting of justice facilities and from onsite streetlights would not increase significantly during operation of the proposed new facilities. The new light sources would not be considerably visible from offsite.

The Land Development Building (LDB) would operate in the evenings and at night only periodically. Regular hours of operation would be between 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Building lighting would be off during hours the building is not in use, while parking lot lighting would remain lit all night. Building and parking lot lighting would be designed to minimize spillover and lighting of the night sky. The building and walkways would be lit with a combination of 30- to 32-inch bollards and ground level spotlights directed at the walls of the building. Parking lot light standards would be consistent with those used at the Finance Administration Building parking lot, including shoe box-type fixtures. Lighting would be downward shielded to avoid illumination of the night sky. The nearest sensitive receptors to the LDB are the residential land uses adjacent to the western project boundary. The proposed landscaping shown on the conceptual plan for the LDB includes shade tree plantings within the parking lot and street tree plantings on both sides of Richardson Drive. These trees would provide additional shielding of light to prevent light spillage towards the residential land uses.

Portions of the Auburn Justice Center (AJC) are proposed to operate 24 hours per day, and, in order to provide appropriate security, would require a slightly higher intensity of lighting than the LDB. Light standards for building, walkway, and parking lot lighting would be the same as for the LDB, but would include a greater number of building and walkway lights. The proposed AJC location is adjacent to the existing night light sources at the Main Jail and Juvenile Hall. While there is a lack of existing sensitive receptors near the AJC site, there is a

residential development proposal currently being considered by Placer County for the vacant property south of Atwood Road. The light from the AJC building and parking lots would be shielded from this future residential site by the existing jail and Juvenile Hall, which are located between the AJC site and Atwood Road. The minor increases in lighting from the AJC are a less than significant impact.

The Children's Emergency Shelter and Women's Center (CES and WC) are proposed to have more residential than governmental/institutional character. Limited lighting of the access driveway to the proposed facilities would be necessary for safety. These projects would likely use 14-foot tall standards, also with shoe box-type fixtures. Building and walkway lighting are expected to consist of bollards and ground level lights. It is also likely that motion-activated lighting would be used around building entries for safety and security. Specific proposals for lighting will be evaluated during subsequent environmental review for each project.

Specific plans for lighting associated with each construction project will be evaluated during the Design Review process for the LDB and AJC and during subsequent environmental review for the CES and WC. Proposed building demolition would have no impact on light levels and glare at DeWitt Center.

Potentially Significant Impacts

Impact 5.1: Damage to Scenic Resources

Significance Before Mitigation:	Potentially Significant
Mitigation:	5.1a through 5.1e
Significance After Mitigation:	Less than Significant

Scenic resources present at the project area include some historic buildings, ornamental and native trees within landscaped areas and within the onsite oak woodland habitat, and other natural features of the open space area. The rural quality of existing development to the west of the project area also contributes to the scenic quality of the project area.

Building and Facility Demolition

The proposed building demolition would remove 24 buildings or portions thereof that contribute to the historic architectural district at DeWitt Center. Of these buildings, 14 of them are the "barracks-style" hospital wards, while four originally served as administration buildings, and three are associated with the decommissioned wastewater treatment plant. *Figure 5-3* shows samples of the buildings proposed for demolition. The design and construction quality of the buildings proposed for demolition do not meet with current design standards and are not a predominant scenic resource in the project area. Additionally, many of the original buildings have been modified internally and externally. External modifications include replacement of windows, doors, and steps; as well as painting and relocation of main entrances. These modifications result in a "moderate" level of change in the building appearance since their "period of significance" (NFA/URS 2002).

Figure 5-3

Figure 5-4

Despite the modifications in appearance and the lack of compliance with modern design standards, the historical nature of the building style and use does contribute to the aesthetic character of the project site. The proposed demolition plan also includes demolition of structures and facilities at the site of the decommissioned wastewater treatment plant onsite. While this treatment plant is designated as occurring within the historic architectural district at DeWitt Center, the facility does not provide any aesthetic or scenic value to the project area.

Land Development Building

Proposed building construction does have the potential to damage existing scenic resources at DeWitt Center. The construction would remove or damage existing trees that are significant elements in both the interior and exterior viewsheds. The LDB site currently supports large lawn areas bordered by shade trees, many of which have reached a significant size. Photos of the LDB site are provided in *Figure 5-4*. Approximately 120 trees, of which 3 are native trees, exist on the site currently; removal of or damage to these trees is a potentially significant impact of the proposed construction. For instance, two of the three native oak trees onsite, as well as six of the eight silver maples along Bell Road would be removed as part of the proposed project. The large silver maples are significant visual resources that provide screening and landscaping along Bell Road. Current landscaping plans for the Land Development Building indicate that the six silver maples to be removed would be replaced with as many as sixteen ornamental specimen trees more suited to the location, therefore ultimately preserving the scenic resource along this portion of Bell Road, although there would be a temporal loss of the resource. Provision of these replacement trees is required by *Mitigation Measure 5.1a*.

The proposed construction and grading plans have been developed to avoid impacts to approximately 22 of the existing trees, as indicated in *Figure 5-5*. Implementation of *Mitigation Measures 5.1a* through *5.1d*, as proposed by the County, would ensure that accidental damage to these 22 trees would be avoided or minimized to the extent feasible. *Mitigation Measure 5.1b* requires that a qualified specialist evaluate all proposed improvements and make recommendations for tree protection, *Mitigation Measure 5.1c* establishes provisions for tree protection during construction, and *Mitigation Measure 5.1d* requires replacement of native trees impacted by the project in accordance with the Placer County Tree Preservation Ordinance. Implementation of these measures would mitigate the impact by avoidance and provision of compensation in the form of replacement resources.

Auburn Justice Center

The AJC site supports only a few existing trees, all of which would be removed as a result of the proposed construction. The site, as shown in *Figure 5-6*, does not support any other scenic resources. Implementation of *Mitigation Measure 5.1d* would ensure that the native trees impacted by the AJC (two oaks) are replaced.

Children's Emergency Shelter and Women's Center

The CES and WC buildings are proposed to be located in the southwestern portion of DeWitt Center, in an area of oak woodland habitat. These project sites are shown in *Figure 5-7*. Provision of site infrastructure and completion of rough site grading would impact several trees within the woodland area. Infrastructure lines must be extended along Atwood Road west of Richardson Drive, then north through the CES project site along the CES and WC access

Figure 5-5 -LDB tree map

Figure 5-6

Figure 5-7

roadway. The infrastructure installation and roadway construction is expected to impact approximately 35 native trees of varying sizes. Rough grading for the building sites is expected to impact an additional eight native trees. These impacts would be mitigated through implementation of *Mitigation Measures 5.1b* through *5.1e*. Based on the preliminary site plans and the results of a native tree survey at the CES and WC sites, future construction of these facilities is not expected to impact any additional trees. However, potential impacts to native trees will be evaluated again during subsequent project-level environmental review of the CES and WC.

Impact 5.2: Degradation of Existing Visual Character of the Site

Significance Before Mitigation:	Potentially Significant
Mitigation:	5.2a and 5.2b
Significance After Mitigation:	Less than Significant

The proposed construction projects included in the DeWitt Government Center Facility Plan (2003 – 2010) have been designed to be compatible with the existing new and old structures throughout the project area. As shown in *Figures 2-9* and *2-11*, the LDB and AJC are proposed to be two-story brick buildings with sloping metal roofs. This design is consistent with the Finance Administration Building and Juvenile Hall, and is reminiscent of the brick construction of the original onsite buildings. Both buildings are proposed to have covered patios at the main entrances to provide gathering spaces, and site landscaping to enhance the building appearance. In compliance with the *Auburn/Bowman Community Plan* Parks and Recreation Section, the proposed project includes provision of Class 1 trails along the frontage of each construction project on Bell Road, Richardson Drive, and Atwood Road. A Class 1 trail is defined by the Placer County Parks Division as being eight feet wide and separated from the roadway. Fencing adjacent to public right-of-ways will be either decorative or solid masonry integrated with the landscaping.

In addition to the land use and zoning requirements established in the *Placer County General Plan* and *Placer County Zoning Ordinance*, the project area is subject to the standards of the *Placer County Design Guidelines Manual* and the *North Auburn Community Development Strategy and Design Guidelines*, which provide goals and guidelines for development in the project area and vicinity. The guidelines provided in these two documents can be used to evaluate the impacts on aesthetics and visual resources resulting from implementation of the DeWitt Government Center Facility Plan. Compliance with the guidelines of the *North Auburn Community Development Strategy and Design Guidelines* project can help meet the County's goal of preserving the scenic integrity of its rural surroundings. The following excerpts are a representative sampling of guidelines that are applicable to the proposed project. The project is consistent with all applicable design guidelines, including those not listed here.

1. Building Design in Core Area and Transition Areas
 - Multi-storied buildings are encouraged in the Core Area of North Auburn.
 - Contemporary architecture using high quality materials especially decorative masonry should be utilized in the Core Area.
2. General Architectural Elements

a) Building Entries

- All buildings located along public right-of-ways shall have their primary entrance accessible from the right-of-way; this can be in the form of individual entrances or aggregated building entrances. All building/units located internal to the site shall have entrances from sidewalks that are designated as an extension of the public sidewalk.
- The primary entries of a building should provide protection from inclement weather in the form of integrated architectural elements such as canopies, arcades, etc.
- Offices and commercial uses should be designated with entrances that consolidate the path to the tenant from the parking area with the path to the tenant from the street. If parking is located behind buildings, and entrances are off of the public street then the use of a breeze way or other pass-through to get pedestrians to the front of a property may be required.
- The main entry shall be clearly identified. Elements that can be used to articulate an entry include, but are not limited to: recesses, additional detailing, overhangs, lighting, and changes in building form.
- When a project has multiple storefronts or entries, they shall be strongly related to the overall design. Each entry shall be treated architecturally in accordance with its importance in function and organization of the project.
- The scale of the entry should be related to the building scale.

b) Building Articulation

- Roof forms shall periodically change height, orientation, or shape consistent with the overall building design. Long, uninterrupted horizontal lines of parapet are not appropriate. Parapet line shall be broken up by vertical or horizontal offsets or changing of roof forms. Breaks in the parapet should articulate building entries, different business or sub-use (such as a garden center or tire shop) or architectural “events” (i.e. change in material, signage, trellis or canopy, horizontal or vertical projections, etc.). In no case may a horizontal parapet line exceed 40 feet in length.
- Building surface variation is also accomplished with the placement of windows and entries, planar changes (where the building surface recedes or projects), significant color changes, material changes, or other elements that add variation along the length of a building. Structures should also have articulation at entries, bases and tops. The organization used shall break up the overall mass into smaller elements. Buildings shall provide as much visual interest as possible without creating a chaotic image.

c) Activity Encroachments

- Functional encroachments (non-building areas such as courtyards, plazas, outdoor eating areas and other “activated” areas) into required set back areas are allowed if they contribute to the visible activity of the public street. Outdoor eating and gathering areas and product display and sales are encouraged where

these areas are designed to accommodate the use. These should have direct connection to the public sidewalk. See Section 15.480 (F) of the Zoning Ordinance.

d) Design Consistency

- All publicly visible building sides shall be designed with a complementary level of detailing and quality of materials. A design concept shall be established for each project and developed on all visible faces of each building. Projects with walls that exceed 20 feet in height are generally not considered to have a back or rear side that could be regulated to a simpler design treatment.
- The design concept should be appropriate to the scale of the building. The use of overly dramatic features that might be in scale on smaller scale projects and inappropriate at a larger scale. In either case dramatic architectural features must be carefully designed.
- The design concept shall be consistent throughout a project. There should be continuity, but not necessarily a simple repetition of components.
- Ancillary structures shall be architecturally designed to be complementary to the main building.

e) Materials and Color

- Uninterrupted and unarticulated monochromatic expanses over 40 feet are not permitted. Colors and materials can be used to help achieve this goal.
- Texture should be considered in selection of materials to add interest to a building and articulate the design.
- The detailing and building materials shall convey a quality of craftsmanship and permanence.
- Reflective glass is highly discouraged.
- “Natural” materials are more desirable than “imitation” materials.
- Preferred materials include:
 - Brick – (or masonry veneer that closely matches) – a minimum of 50% of the building front facade and 30% for the remainder of the building in the Core Area
 - Split face block
 - Stucco (but not as a primary material)
 - Shingled roofs (wood, concrete, tile, dimensional composition, etc.)
 - Natural wood
 - Wooden beams and posts
 - Metal roofing (high quality baked enamel finish to protect fading)

4. Landscaping

a) Design Concept

- The Core Area streets should be improved to urban standards with a planting strip with broad canopy street trees adjacent to the street surface, a six to eight foot sidewalk and minimal building setbacks.
- In the Core Area a more formal regular spacing (20 to 30 feet) of a single straight row of large deciduous street trees is required to create a street tree theme. Additional plantings will be required in the landscape area.
- Whether a formal or informal landscape design concept is used, the selected design concept should be reflected along the entire length or substantial continuous component of the street frontage.
- Landscaping and architectural features should be used to screen from view certain visually undesirable elements such as parking, storage, and loading, refuse containers, utilities and irrigation controls.

7. Parking

- Divert parking to the interior or interior side of the site, and where possible, placed behind buildings, unless there are circumstances associated with the site that make this infeasible.
- Parking areas should be designed and landscaped to create smaller parking modules.
- Design walkways, landscaping and fencing within parking lots so that they do not create barriers for pedestrians.
- 50% of the parking area shall be shaded within 15 years of building permit issuance.

Building and Facility Demolition

Building demolition plans have been focused on those existing buildings that are in the worst shape aesthetically and structurally. The buildings are of a basic construction, with long unarticulated faces, and limited variety of building materials. As discussed above, many of the original buildings have been moderately modified since their construction, including replacement of windows, doors, and steps; painting; and relocation of main entrances. As such, these buildings are not a significant aesthetic resource of the project area. Samples of the buildings proposed for demolition are shown in *Figure 5-3*.

Twenty-four buildings or portions thereof onsite are proposed for demolition. Of the buildings proposed for demolition, seven are located in the LDB site and must be demolished to accommodate that building and associated parking. The remaining buildings proposed for demolition are no longer suited for occupancy as they are not seismically safe and are very likely to contain hazardous materials such as asbestos and lead-based paint. Based on direction from the County Board of Supervisors, the Department of Facility Services is working towards consolidation of government offices and services at DeWitt Center. It is anticipated that areas

where demolition occurs under the currently proposed project will be identified for development in future facility planning efforts.

The DeWitt Government Center Facility Plan does not identify plans for development at the majority of demolition sites. Following building demolition, the sites would be revegetated with hydroseeding, low-maintenance ground cover, or other materials and/or covered with inorganic materials pursuant to the requirements of *Mitigation Measure 5.2a*. This would prevent a negative aesthetic impact related to the creation of bare ground within the project area. While the removal of the seven buildings and portions of three buildings between C and D Avenues, the four buildings north of B Avenue, and the seven buildings at the LDB site would have a noticeable aesthetic impact on the interior viewshed of the project area, the overall visual character of DeWitt Center would not be degraded. The demolition of the three buildings associated with the wastewater treatment plant would have no impact on the interior or exterior viewshed of the project area as the buildings are not considered to be scenic resources and are not visible from most of the developed areas within DeWitt Center.

Land Development Building

The *Placer County General Plan* and *Auburn/Bowman Community Plan* identify Bell Road as a scenic corridor. Changes in conditions at DeWitt Center that are visible from Bell Road could degrade the scenic qualities of the designated scenic corridor. Of the proposed construction and demolition, the only portion that could be viewed from Bell Road is the LDB site, which is shown in *Figure 5-4*. This proposed construction avoids degradation of the scenic corridor by placing tree plantings and other landscaping between the building and Bell Road, by incorporating horizontal articulation in the wall facing Bell Road, and by avoiding placement of parking lots within sight of Bell Road. The building and site design and pedestrian facilities comply with the guidelines of the *North Auburn Community Development Strategy and Design Guidelines*.

The LDB site currently supports a large lawn area south of Bell Road, consisting of approximately 67,500 square feet. Construction of the LDB would reduce the lawn area by approximately 17,500 square feet, while maintaining approximately 50,000 square feet of lawn and other landscaping in the northern portion of the LDB site. The building setback from Bell Road would be approximately 40 feet. That area would be landscaped with existing and new trees, shrubs, and ground covers. A meandering sidewalk is proposed along the LDB site's frontage on Bell Road, with an extension of the walkway providing access to the main building entrance. The sidewalk would be continued south along the site's frontage on Richardson Drive, with the proposed Class I trail along the west side of Richardson Drive in the vicinity of the proposed LDB site. A "pedestrian spine," consisting of a wide sidewalk, extends south across the parking lot, providing a pedestrian connection to portions of DeWitt Center south of the LDB site. Landscaping would be provided along this spine through the southern portion of the LDB site. The building and site design and pedestrian facilities comply with the guidelines of the *North Auburn Community Development Strategy and Design Guidelines*.

As discussed above, under Impact 5-1, the LDB site currently supports approximately 120 trees, of which 38 would be preserved and integrated into the landscaping plan for this site. The majority of the existing trees are ornamental, non-native species. Impacts to existing native trees are discussed in **CHAPTER 9, BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**. The loss of trees, both native and

non-native, would be partly mitigated through implementation of the landscaping plans. Scattered trees and shrubs will be planted in the northern lawn areas, while several trees would be planted along the site frontage on Bell Road to retain the scenic resource provided by the existing trees. The conceptual plan also provides for planting street trees on the east side of Richardson Drive and East Drive. Parking lot landscaping provides trees in island planters. The proposed tree planting complies with the landscaping and parking guidelines stated above. Perimeter fencing along Bell Road and Richardson Drive would be either decorative or solid masonry integrated with the landscaping.

Auburn Justice Center

As shown in *Figure 2-11*, the proposed AJC would be a two-story brick building with a sloping metal roof. A Justice Building and an Ancillary Building would comprise the AJC. The Justice Building is proposed to be an L-shape following the alignments of Richardson Drive and B Avenue. The Ancillary Building would be located adjacent to the southern wall of the Justice Building, and would also be an L-shape, with one leg angled parallel to the existing parking lot at the Juvenile Hall site. The main entrance of the AJC would face the intersection of Richardson Drive and B Avenue. A wide pedestrian pathway would lead from the roadway intersection to a front patio area, through the main building entrance, and into a circular lobby similar to the lobby at the Finance Administration Building. It would also connect to a proposed meandering sidewalk along Richardson Drive. Pedestrian connections to other parking areas and to B Avenue are also proposed. As the building design is very similar to the Finance Administration Building, which was identified as an example of high quality design during preparation of the *North Auburn Community Development Strategy and Design Guidelines*, construction of the AJC would not have a significant impact on the aesthetic qualities of the scenic corridor along Bell Road.

The northern wall of the AJC is proposed to be setback from Richardson Drive by ± 70 feet, while the western wall would be setback from B Avenue by ± 70 feet. Both setback areas would be landscaped with assorted trees, shrubs, and ground covers. Landscaped berms up to six feet tall would be constructed within the setback from Richardson Drive. An open courtyard for employee use is proposed for the south side of the Justice Building. It would support a patio and scattered trees. Additional landscaping would occur around the perimeter of the Ancillary Building, primarily consisting of ground covers and shrubs.

Scattered trees and shrubs exist currently on the project site, all of which would be removed as a result of project development. The project site is shown in *Figure 5-6*. This tree removal is a potentially significant impact to existing scenic resources that would be mitigated through tree planting as stipulated in *Mitigation Measure 5.2b* to replace the two oak trees impacted by this construction.

Parking would be constructed west and south of the AJC, with the majority of parking to be located to the south. An existing parking lot along Richardson Drive, north of B Avenue, would be expanded by approximately 100 parking spaces available for public use. Approximately 100 parking spaces for justice department officials and staff would be provided south of the Justice Building, west of Richardson Drive. Up to 200 additional secured parking spaces reserved for staff and officers of the AJC and Main Jail would be provided in the southern portion of the AJC site. These spaces would be secured behind decorative fencing and gates. The gates would be

operated with programmable cards issued to each authorized personnel. The use of chain link fencing is necessary for security in interior areas immediately adjacent to the Main Jail and at the vehicle storage yard across B Avenue. The use of chain link fencing would be limited to the interior yard areas not easily visible from public circulation routes.

While the conceptual site plan for the AJC does not include landscaping materials within these parking areas, landscape islands are indicated. With implementation of *Mitigation Measure 5.2b*, the non-secure parking lot design and landscaping would comply with the applicable guidelines. Perimeter fencing along Richardson Drive and B Avenue would be either decorative or solid masonry integrated with the landscaping.

Pedestrian linkages between the proposed AJC and adjacent and surrounding parking lots, as well as between the AJC and the existing justice and detention facilities are provided throughout the conceptual site plans, in compliance with the design guidelines and strategies.

Children's Emergency Shelter and Women's Center

The CES and WC projects are proposed to be located in the southwestern portion of DeWitt Center, in an area of oak woodland habitat, shown in *Figure 5-7*. The woodland habitat would be impacted by the proposed facility development, thus degrading the scenic qualities of the site. These impacts would be mitigated through implementation of *Mitigation Measures 5.1a* through *5.1d*. These impacts will be evaluated again during subsequent project-level environmental review of the CES and WC.

5.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

Damage to Scenic Resources

Mitigation Measure 5.1a: The final site plans for the Land Development Building shall preserve two of the eight silver maples along Bell Road and shall provide plantings along this frontage in replacement of the six trees removed.

Mitigation Measure 5.1b: The final landscaping plans for the Land Development Building, Auburn Justice Center, Children's Emergency Shelter, and Women's Center shall include all measures necessary for the protection of those existing trees indicated on site plans as preserved. The final landscaping plans shall be implemented during project construction. This will include installation of tree protection fencing, which will consist of four-foot tall plastic mesh fencing installed on six-foot poles spaced a maximum of 20 feet apart. The poles shall be installed with two feet of length below ground and four feet above ground. The fencing shall encompass an area 150% of the drip line of the tree where feasible, and in no case shall be less than 85% of the drip line of the tree being protected. Tree protection fencing shall be installed and inspected by staff from the Placer County Department of Public Works prior to issuance of a grading permit for each site. Planting in accordance with the final landscaping plans shall commence immediately following construction activities. Compliance with the final landscaping plans shall be confirmed by a representative of the Placer County Design Review Committee prior to issuance of an occupancy

permit for the Land Development Building, the Auburn Justice Center, the Children's Emergency Shelter, and the Women's Center.

Mitigation Measure 5.1c: In order to preserve all significant trees at the Land Development Building, the Auburn Justice Center, the Children's Emergency Shelter, and the Women's Center sites, appropriate vegetation protection measures will be prescribed in the site improvement plans and enforced by the contracting agency. A qualified specialist shall evaluate all proposed improvements that may affect each native and ornamental tree to be preserved, make appropriate recommendations on these proposed improvements, and oversee construction of these improvements during site development.

Mitigation Measure 5.1d: Any native trees impacted by development of the Land Development Building, the Auburn Justice Center, the Children's Emergency Shelter, or the Women's Center shall be replaced through the planting of one fifteen-gallon container-size tree on the DeWitt Center property for each native tree removed or impacted. Three (3) five-gallon trees, five (5) one-gallon trees, or fifteen (15) tube seedlings can be substituted for each fifteen-gallon tree to be planted. Approximately half of the replacement trees are to be blue oaks, one-quarter are to be valley oaks and one-quarter interior live oak. The health and structure of these trees shall be monitored for five years and any trees that do not survive shall be replaced. Tree replacement for each construction project shall occur prior to issuance of certificates of occupancy for any new structures and shall comply with the standards of the Placer County Tree Preservation Ordinance in effect at the time of the issuance of grading permits for each site.

Mitigation Measure 5.1e: The improvement plans for the Children's Emergency Shelter and the Women's Center shall route roadways and infrastructure to avoid removal of trees and minimize site grading wherever possible. Building sites shall also be selected to minimize tree removal and site grading.

Degradation of Existing Visual Character

Mitigation Measure 5.2a: The final landscaping or grading plans for the building demolition areas shall include revegetation of the uncovered areas. Revegetation may include hydroseeding, ground covers, and/or shrubs. No portion of the demolition area may be left with exposed soil. Revegetation must include some native and/or drought-tolerant plant species. Areas where planting does not occur shall be covered with a mulch type of material, such as wood chips, or an inorganic ground cover such as rock or gravel. The plants shall be watered sufficiently to establish the plant materials. To preserve the areas for future development, final landscaping plans for building demolition areas will not include tree plantings.

Mitigation Measure 5.2b: The final landscaping plans for the Land Development Building and the Auburn Justice Center shall include tree planting in all parking areas sufficient to attain 50% shading of each parking lot within 15 years of building permit issuance, and shall include planting of street trees along all roadway frontages. Applicable roadway frontages for the Land Development Building include portions of Bell

Road, Richardson Drive, DeWitt Drive, and East Drive. Applicable roadway frontages for the Auburn Justice Center include portions of Richardson Drive and B Avenue. Street trees shall be planted in a meandering, irregular pattern at intervals of between 20 and 30 feet, and shall consist of species that develop broad canopies to adequately shade the roadways.